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ABSTRACT

An outline is presented of successful elements of a research program, developed by the American Federation of Teachers, to connect teachers with research-based information. Focus of the research was in the areas of classroom management and teaching effectiveness. The program is implemented through the teacher organization and has the elements of peer-level understanding of teacher needs, a level of trust in program leadership, and a non-threatening, non-evaluative atmosphere in which to investigate research. Training sessions for a peer-selected cadre of teachers, Teacher Research Linkers (TRLs), are conducted in a problem-solving, discussion-oriented mode; TRLs then work on a one-to-one basis with their colleagues, with fellow teachers in small groups, or in workshops. Support for the program was obtained from local education agencies and building supervisors. Research information is delivered in a meaningful form to teachers, and teachers apply research-based strategies to classroom practice. Teachers have responded positively to the program, often providing feedback to their peers and to the research community. Implications of educational research for teachers are discussed, and practical examples of its impact on classroom practice are presented. (JD)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION PROGRAM

NIE-G-81-0021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION PROGRAM
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BACKGROUND

Convinced that the results of educational research generated over the past two decades could be of practical value to classroom teachers, the American Federation of Teachers felt that the union as an organization of professional peers could develop a pilot dissemination mechanism designed to bridge the gap between research and practice. Based on national office interactions with teachers who told us of their desire for help in better managing the classroom environment, we decided to focus on research on classroom management and effective teaching.

The project represented a unique undertaking in several ways. First, NIE funds were being used for actual dissemination of research results directly to teachers. Second, the teacher union was taking a strong leadership role in the professional aspect of teachers' lives in collaboration with researchers. Third, teachers were given the rare opportunity to participate in an educational program without the threat of negative judgements or administrative mandates. Fourth, a report documenting project outcomes would be produced.

National Institute of Education funding for the two-year period provided for program development and implementation in three pilot sites: New York City, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Three project staff members were hired to design the program and provide technical assistance to those sites. Two staff members were AFT Educational Issues Department assistant directors. They were responsible for carrying out local site development, training and other field-related activities of the project. Both were experienced classroom teachers. The third member of the team, a technical assistant whose primary responsibility was research identification and translation, had had experience in research usage and translation. The technical assistant spent a minor portion of her time in the field, primarily to assess the "saleability" of the research translations and to document needed changes for the final editting of materials. All three staff members contributed to the writing of the training and resource manual and to reports submitted to NIE.

The overall duties and responsibilities of the project staff, then, entailed orchestration and implementation of the following activities:

1. Identifying and translating useful research on classroom management and effective teaching;

2. Developing training materials for use in pilot sites in areas of research and dissemination;

3. Working with local union leadership in each of three sites to establish project structure;

4. Training a cadre of Teacher Research Linkers (TRLs) at each site in the research, as well as in training and dissemination techniques;

5. Establish collaborative relationships among institutions of higher education, the research community, national AFT, and local project sites;

6. Developing a training and resource manual to be used for replication of the pilot project for other local unions; and

7. Reporting program process and outcomes to NIE and to other educators.

In addition to funding, NIE provided AFT staff with information on dissemination and research projects in the areas of classroom management and effective teaching. A formal advisory board comprised of Ann Lieberman, Teachers College, Columbia University; Lee Shulman, Institute for Research on Teaching and Stanford University; and Beatrice Ward, Far West Educational Research Laboratories helped guide AFT staff in identifying research and documenting project activity.

KEY COMPONENTS

- Identification of Sites

Sites were selected using a modified RFP process. Announcement of program start-up was mailed to AFT's fifty largest locals and each state federation. Twenty-nine requests for application forms were received. Eleven locals submitted completed application forms which included survey information on teacher and student populations, union inservice mechanisms, availability of local resources to carry out program implementation and a commitment statement for continuing the program once AFT technical assistance was removed. In addition, a phone survey was conducted to obtain additional information from each local. Three sites - New York City (United Federation of Teachers), San Francisco

(San Francisco Federation of Teachers) and Washington, D.C. (Washington Teachers' Union) - were selected.

In addition to the above criteria, these sites were selected based on the size and variety of populations they served, geographic location, their access to institutions of higher education and/or educational research facilities, the working relationship with central and building administration. In addition, because Washington, D.C. is the location of the AFT headquarters, we felt one site, in close proximity, could provide us with easy access to project teachers for immediate field-testing of research translations.

- Selecting Local Site Coordinators

After meeting with local union leadership in each site, project staff determined that in New York and Washington, the local coordinators for the project would be the teacher center directors, and in San Francisco, the coordinator would be the former director of the center who was now serving as "teacher-in-charge" of a pilot elementary school. We felt the philosophy of the teacher center, which supports peer-to-peer dissemination, would enhance the likelihood that these teacher center directors would be effective coordinators of the AFT-ER&D project at thier sites.

- Selecting Teacher Research Linkers (TRLs)

TRL selection actively involved the local coordinator in each site. Coordinators were given a list of suggested criteria for selection. Each local modified the selection process. In New York, a group of teacher center specialists and teachers who had conducted workshops through the teacher center were invited to an initial session describing the project and presenting Beginning of the Year Classroom Management research. Of the forty, twenty-one became TRLs in the project. Those who did not continue the training felt either constrained by the time or that their schools, because of a lack of cohesion among administration and faculty would not be conducive to this kind of process. Although we would have liked all 40 to stay involved, we felt this modification through a "self-weeding out" process would help assure some level of commitment and interest for those who stayed.

In San Francisco, TRLs were chosen based on past activity in the union and location buildings where principals would be supportive of the project. Only two of the nine TRLs chosen had prior experience in providing professional growth opportunities to teachers.

In Washington, TRLs were selected on a voluntary basis from the union's building representative structure. A description of the project was given at the WTU's annual leadership conference attended by all building representatives. Initially, 20 teachers volunteered to have the project in their schools. Only five did not complete training. Of the fifteen who completed training, only four had prior experience in delivering inservice activities. While we had suggested prior experience in the "trainer" role, this did not appear to be a priority criterion across the sites. This selection process was our first cooperative task with locals sites, and we did not force the issue. Input and ownership by the site was critical at this juncture if further work was going to be accomplished.

Compensation for those involved at the local level was through existing union and school district structures. For the most part, local personnel donated their time for both training and dissemination activities. Training time at sites involved 45½ hours in New York, 31 hours in San Francisco and 47 hours in Washington.

IDENTIFYING USABLE RESEARCH

Project staff with assistance from the Advisory Board defined several factors to be critical in identifying potential research that would be viewed as useful for classroom use by a wide range of teachers in various settings.

- Perceived Need

  It was clear through national and local union contacts with members, managing behavior and improving student achievement were priority concerns among teachers although neither the AFT nor the three pilot sites conducted a needs assessment specific to this project.

- Practical Application

  The research selected would have to provide a framework that suggested relevant strategies for daily classroom application. Too often teachers view research stereotypically as "ivory-tower," limited, irrelevant theory. Therefore, any research presented to teachers, particulary in initial stages, should enhance experiential knowledge and established practice and allow teachers to "walk away" with a plan that can be put into effect as soon as possible. Additionally, research should suggest strategies that are teacher-controllable rather than dependent on administratively established policies.

- Generic In Scope

Since the project staff would be working with teachers across all grade levels and disciplines, the research had to have implications for all teachers. We were concerned that most of the research had been done at the elementary level and concentrated on student achievement in reading and mathematics. As we developed translations and conducted training sessions, we relied on our own experience and that of the Teacher Research Linkers for validating the general applicability of research findings. (See Appendix A)

- Consistent Findings

Teachers often view research as contradictory in nature; findings from one study may refute another. To help neutralize this perception and lend to the credibility of research and the project, we consciously sought a validated body of knowledge which consistently signalled a clear message about effective teaching practices. Once attitudes were changed and a greater appreciation for research developed, we were able to offer "contradictory" findings to challenge TRLs' thinking. Most often they concluded that findings were not contradictory, but rather represented the pursuit of a different research question.

- Observation-Based Data

The first research presented to TRLs was based on actual classroom observation of "real" classrooms. TRLs were more receptive to this kind of research because it gave them the chance to look vicariously into other teachers' classrooms and see what constituted more and less effective practice.

- "Translatable" Studies

AFT staff were not trained researchers or statisticians; therefore, we sought reports in which statistical data had been interpreted. We relied initially on reviews and summaries to get a "sense" of the research. Most often these were not enough to ensure the integrity of our translations. Original studies and/or the specific researchers were consulted for clarification.

The project advisory board suggested research studies by Anderson, Berliner, Brophy, Doyle, Emmer, Evertson, Fisher, Gage, MacDonald, Rosenshine, Soar and Stallings. As staff became familiar with these works and that of others, we were able to broaden our network of resources.

TRANSLATION OF RESEARCH

An initial assumption regarding teacher use of research information was that seldom are findings reported in terms understandable to the practitioner. Statistics and research jargon are appropriate tools of the research community but present difficulty for the teacher. Additionally, most researchers are not willing to set forth the implications for practice. Attempts to provide translations for practice have often resulted in educational policy mandates framed in prescriptive "research says" absolutes. The underlying philosophy for this project was to present research information as a resource framework, non-threatening in nature, that would nourish teacher investigation, problem-solving and self-evaluation as to what was useful.

Therefore, within the translations, we attempted to identify basic research concepts, illustrated by suggestions for practice within each narrative and reinforced through accompanying training activities.

In summary, project staff became convinced that research statistics needed to be interpreted clearly and significant relationships delineated with clarifying comments for teacher use. Reporting of research findings would have to allow for reflection and introspection by teachers, rather than providing only prescriptive how-tos, to promote inquiry and understanding. While teachers may need specific information on a single study, conclusions and findings from a wide body of studies, such as those provided in syntheses and reviews, would have to be cited so as to aid in translation for teacher use.

TRANSFORMATION OF RESEARCH INTO USABLE KNOWLEDGE

One of the most important insights gained in this program was that translation of research into language meaningful to teachers is only one step in facilitating implementation of research strategies in the classroom. What really bridged the gap between research and practice was a process now referred to as "transformation of research."

This transformation process was one in which the "meaning" of the research as useful information was constructed as AFT staff and local TRLs engaged in an interaction with the research content. Over an extended period of time this process evolved into a series of steps which were established through the training process:

1. Neutralization of negative attitudes toward research and development of trust and peer-to-peer interaction;

2. Training and discussion of research concepts for classroom use;

3. Strategy development for implementation in practice and validation of research; and

4. Development of the TRL as a research disseminator.

These steps in the transformation process could not have transpired simply by reading the research translations.

- Neutralization Of Negative Attitudes Toward Research

It was clear to AFT project staff that before presenting any research to TRLs, negative attitudes had to be at least neutralized in order that teachers would be receptive to the information. This meant creating a framework which met teachers' needs, outlined uses of research and presented the limitations of research in a rational manner. The emphasis on the non-evaluative, peer-to-peer nature of the project reinforced these concepts and created an environment in which "training" could take place. It was also necessary to assure TRLs that they were valued as professionals whose opinions were important.

- Training Through Discussion Of Concepts For Classroom Use

Translations provided suggestions for strategy development based on research concepts. Training sessions consisted of a regular pattern of open discussion of concepts as they related to TRLs' own practice, both individually and collectively. For the most part, AFT project staff generally reviewed the concepts addressed in each translation which TRLs had read in preparation for the session. Most session training time was devoted to focused discussion on implications of the research findings for classroom use. Group-participation activities were designed to further stimulate reflection on the research concepts - role-playing, simulations, case studies, etc.

- Strategy Development for Implementation and Validation

The final segment of each research training session was devoted to individual strategy development by TRLs. TRLs were asked to pick one or two concepts, transform

those concepts into workable strategies and implement the strategies in their classrooms during the three week period between training sessions. Results were evaluated and discussed at the next session. (See Appendix B, RESEARCH ACTION PLAN/ REACTION TO RESEARCH)

- Development Of The TRL As Research Disseminator

This was a four-step cycle involving training, planning, practice and actual presentation. Most TRLs began to share some of the research information immediately. However, in preparing for organized dissemination, TRLs were given information on adult learning theory, teacher change and "facilitating" stragtegies. In planning for dissemination, TRLs had to review research in an "other-oriented" framework, e.g., what are the implications for other teachers? Those TRLs who were not experienced as "trainers" needed practice time which was built into training sessions. The project staff created "dissemination simulations" designed for brainstorming strategies to help TRLs deal with situations they might confront as "presenters."

The most valuable research sharing experiences took place at individual building levels. It is at this level that the on-going practice of examining and utilizing research-based information was maintained. Teachers are usually isolated from their peers, their days being spent with students. Teachers' needs are immediate and cannot be effectively met by workshop sessions that convene two months after the problem has arisen. Given a continuous supply of information, linkers can continue to share the research with individual teachers who ask for help or in small informal groups, organized study groups and regularly scheduled faculty meeting groups. The role of research facilitators was realized as TRLs served as on-site consultants capitalizing on their proximity to fellow teachers.

The final step - presentation - pulled together the reading, discussion and implementation of the research. TRLs found they were able to refer to the research to answer other teachers' questions and help them develop their own strategies. These experiences helped TRLs solidify their new attitude; research can be a useful tool to enhance the teaching and learning process. As TRLs incorporated research into the mainstream of their thinking as professionals, they helped to create this mindset with other teachers with whom they worked.

We feel that with this complete process, conducted in a trusting, non-evaluative environment, the real meaning of research related to practice can be understood by teachers.

COLLABORATION

The program sought to underscore the key role of the union in delivery of services to its members by establishing a relationship between the educational research community and practicing teachers. Interest in promoting this goal was generated by local education agencies, institutions of higher education and federal labs.

- Collaboration with Institutions of Higher Education

Program collaboration with colleges and universities was designed to accomplish the following: 1) provide an ongoing supply of relevant research in areas identified by the local, 2) "translate" the research for local consumption, 3) keep locals abreast of current research, and 4) perpetuate lines of communication between teachers and researchers. These, we felt, in addition to the continuous training of new TRLs to disseminate the research, would serve to institutionalize program process at each site.

Initial plans to develop collaborative relationships with IHEs without research facilities were perhaps too ambitious, given the reality of the economic climate. Concerns about the acquisition of funds for university staff to identify and translate new research at the local level presented continuing dilemmas. College staffing is at a minimum and existing programs have already evidenced limitations due to cuts in funding. Project locals are exploring ways to continue the ER&D process, but shortages have served as major stumbling blocks to effective institutionalization of the program. We found, however, that colleges and universities which had research facilities were more likely to collaborate.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM AND LEVELS OF SUCCESS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR REPLICATION IN OTHER UNION LOCALS

The project was successful in all three sites; however, the levels of success varied. By the end of the funding period the following had occurred:

SITE	DISSEMINATION MECHANISM	TRLs TRAINED	1ST DISSEMINATION EFFORT	# OF TEACHERS REACHED
A	Teacher Center	21	After 2nd session	1,718 (15 TRLs Reporting)
B	Teacher Center	15	After 4th session	599 (11 TRLs Reporting)
C	Local Educational Issues Committee	9	After 8th session	135 (7 TRLs Reporting)

In Site A, TRLs continued dissemination efforts endorsed by a collaborating institution through the local teacher center. In Site B the same pattern is being followed. Site C has begun training a "second line" of TRLs and is arranging for one of the original TRLs to do sabbatical work with a collaborating research institution. All three sites are continuing work at the building level.

We can begin to suggest possible conditions for replication of the program in other sites by examining the variance of levels of success as they relate to structure.

- The Union As Deliverer of Quality Staff Development

In both sites A and B we worked with local teacher centers which were established by and staffed with local union leaders and staff. Tapping into this exisitng mechanism meant almost immediate access to teachers who viewed teacher center offerings as valid and helpful. In Site C, the local educational issues committee had offered some in-service workshops, but a continuing program such as this was atypical of the local's efforts.

- The Institutionalization Of The Delivery Mechanism

In Sites A and B, the teacher centers had been in operation for three years prior to program start up. Site A most closely paralleled the structure envisioned by AFT program staff, that is, resource persons (TRLs) at the building level. Site A's teacher center was staffed by teacher specialists in various school buildings throughout the school system. Therefore, it was easier to begin dissemination, since the TRLs who were also teacher center staff were already full-time "consultants" to teachers in buildings and could build program information into their repertoire of resources. This group also provided valuable help and support to TRLs who were classroom teachers.

In Site B, the teacher center, physically, is housed in one building and provides on-site assistance to teachers who request it. Selection of TRLs was done through the union building representative structure. This is historically the union's most effective dissemination model. Any information the union wants individual members to receive is done through this network.

In Site C the educational issues committee has a relatively new structure. Basically the program started in this site "from scratch," in the sense that there was no regular union inservice network to "plug" in to. In addition, the local union here was not the bargaining representative of the teachers and the school system was in a relative state of flux. For example, teacher assignments

were not completed until October of each school year. This presented problems in initially selecting TRLs for the program since it was important to consider the degree to which principals would support this process. Late transfers could result in a TRL placement in a school where this kind of staff development could not flourish. Site C most closely approximated our original plan to distribute 2 TRLs per school site and work in no more than 5 to 6 buildings. As the program developed, however, we encountered some difficulties with this limited number of TRLs at one site. Attendance at training sessions was easily affected by school district programs or emergency commitments, leaving a sparse number of participants for ER&D activities. We were reminded that by nature of their selection, TRLs are leadership types already involved in many school/community related programs. Obtaining continued time commitments from them is a very sensitive undertaking.

- Level Of Experience Of TRLs

The experience of TRLs as resource persons may also affect the level of success as the figures below indicate.

SITE	# OF TRLs	# OF TRLs WITH PRIOR EXPERIENCE AS IN-SERVICE LEADERS
A	21	21
B	15	4
C	9	2

Obviously, where TRLs had little or no experience in the role of "teacher of teachers" more time had to be devoted to developing these skills, particularly as they related to research dissemination. We found that practice sessions or pairing of less-experienced TRLs with more-experienced TRLs was helpful in overcoming the anxieties of being a "prophet in your own land," or feeling unsure about a total understanding of the knowledge-base.

- Support Of The Local School Administration

In both Sites A and B collaboration with local school administration had been on-going in the teacher center process. In Site B TRLs were given three professional leave days to use for training. In addition, in Site B, building principals were as eager as teachers to have local TRLs conduct teacher meetings to share the

information. In Site A, the support was also strong among building principals. One commented that he welcomed the TRL's efforts since he did not have the time to be the instructional leader running a school of 600+ pupils with no assistance. In Site C there was tacit support from most building principals. One building principal was more active in his support. Teachers in this school are afforded regular inservice once a week - voluntary, during preparation time. The program information has been included in these sessions by TRLs in that site. The central office administration steered clear of program efforts until they saw the materials and how teachers received the information. They then offered to "collaborate," but the local feared this would endanger the non-evaluative nature of the program.

- Loyalty To The Union

TRLs had all been active union members. In acting as a representative (linker) of the program, it was important that the TRL display loyalty to the sponsoring organization (dissemination research supports this concept). Not only did this ensure the peer-to-peer, self-evaluative nature of the process, but also the recognition given to TRLs by the union motivated them to carry out their roles since the recognition was coming from an organization the TRL valued.

- Replication Of ER&D Process

Project staff feel that the presence of the following characteristics in a site will enhance the likelihood of successful replication of the program.

1. The prior existence of a dissemination structure, or the capacity to build one.
2. If a structure exists, the level of acceptance by teachers of these structures as providers of quality professional growth opportunities.
3. The degree of experience of those who assume the TRL role.
4. The level of administrative support without fear of mandate.
5. The loyalty of program TRLs to the sponsoring organization (the local union).
6. The ability to guarantee a peer-to-peer, self-evaluative process.
7. The availability of local research institutions. (In Sites A and C, more solidified collaboration has been established. In both cases,

the collaborating institutions have research faculty in addition to teacher training faculty. In Site B, while there are a variety of institutions of higher education in the area, these are primarily teacher training institutions.)

ADDITIONAL DISSEMINATION

Project staff were called upon to conduct research training and project awareness sessions in other sites. Because a primary goal of the program is to replicate in other sites what was done in the pilot sites, we responded to these requests as often as possible. For the most part. requests came via word of mouth from teachers or administrators who had heard about the activities of the TRLs in the pilot sites. We also made some efforts to interact with locals who had been eliminated in our pilot site selection process and who might be considered for the next line of training. Additionally, project staff served as presenters at local, national and regional education conferences. In some instances, trained TRLs were used to conduct research sessions at sites outside of their school communities. Large groups of teachers were reached at the AFT National Conventions as well as system-wide workshops held in major cities. In most instances attendance at workshops was open to all teachers regardless of union affiliation. (See Appendix C - ER&D Collaboration Conferences and Conventions)

FEEDBACK: TRLs' REACTIONS TO THE RESEARCH

The AFT ER&D Program did not intend to scientifically document changes in teacher practice. Our documentation consisted of gathering feedback from teachers who implemented research-based strategies. However, the process provided significant testimonial data to support our belief that, as a result, real changes took place in the classroom. The condition of voluntary involvement of program participants in a non-threatening/non-judgemental atmosphere contributed significantly, we felt, to the high level of credible input from these teachers.

Briefly described, feedback from TRLs was provided via the research training cycle of presenting research to the TRLs, having them implement self-selected strategies in their classrooms and then report back to the group on the workability of the research strategies from their own perspectives. To facilitate the self-reporting process, TRLs were provided with Research Action and Research Reaction Forms (Appendix B) to document research-based strategies

already built into their teaching behaviors during the three-week period between training sessions, as well as, those strategies selected for classroom implementation. The information on the Research Action/Reaction forms was supplemented by TRLs' verbal comments made during the discussion portion of the training sessions or in the course of conversation with AFT program staff during school visitations. Other feedback came from regular classroom teachers with whom the research information had been shared. Finally, members of the AFT program staff each kept records of their experiences with program process through the use of Field Logs (Appendix D) to further provide consistent and continuous documentation of all aspects of the program.

One of the most appealing aspects of the ER&D program was the prospect of teacher-users of research providing feedback to the researchers on their classroom experiences and perceptions regarding the research findings.

In spite of differences in size, district policies, and make-up of student and teacher populations among the pilot sites, we found commonalities in their reception of and reactions to research findings.

GENERAL FEEDBACK

"Knowing what made for more effective teachers made me think about my own teaching." This comment from a TRL typifies the attitude of general reflection on practice demonstrated by the teachers in the program. Similarly, the research information served to affirm good practice by experienced teachers. Typically, veteran teachers reacted in this manner. "It took 15 years of hard work for me to develop my program, and here it is in the research.... I wonder why this information wasn't given to us when we were in training?" Much of the feedback we received from teachers clearly indicated that they would recommend the inclusion of applicable research-based knowledge in the teacher training process.

Sometimes TRLs provided feedback which indicated that in using the research strategies in their teaching and in their interactions with peers, supervisors, and even with members of their families, they had experienced an elevated sense of personal esteem. Some TRLs used the research information to support their teaching practices and were successful in getting school principals to upgrade teacher performance evaluations. Other TRLs gained the respect and admiration of fellow teachers and school administrators because of their "expertise" in

research-based teaching information. One TRL shared, "My husband now respects my work because he sees me as a decision-maker and a manager."

The TRLs indicated a certain renewal of professional pride as a result of program training activities. With few exceptions, teachers welcomed the research knowledge. Besides finding the research useful for classroom practice, teachers were able to "intellectualize" over their profession during training sessions.

Studies Used During Program Period Included:

Beginning of the Year Classroom Management
(Evertson, Anderson, Emmer)

Teacher Praise (Brophy)

Direct Instruction
(Rosenshine, Good and Grouws, Stallings, et al.)

Group Management (Kounin)

Time on Task
(Fisher, Berliner, et al., Stallings)

BEGINNING OF THE YEAR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The Classroom Management research generated a great deal of interest among TRLs in each of the sites. We thought, at first, that these experienced teachers would view these basic findings as too simplistic or "too old-hat." Quite the opposite was true. In presenting the information on effective room arrangement, we found that TRLs who worked with children from pre-school through 12th grade were all interested in considering ways of arranging their classrooms for optimum management and control. As TRLs worked on simulated room arrangement using paper squares, circles and rectangles to represent desks, chairs and tables, secondary teachers conferred with elementary teachers, seeking advice on how best to arrange the classroom for "grouped-instruction."

TRLs also responded well to the information on establishing rules and procedures in the classroom as soon as school begins. For many teachers, the most important message they gleaned from these findings is that rules should be taught to students in the same manner used to teach a curriculum subject.

TEACHER PRAISE

Research on Teacher Praise, was described as a "professionally exciting" piece of research, which stimulated much discussion. Originally, TRLs were prone to question Brophy's findings on praise. But, after more in-depth study of the findings, they tended to agree that the act of praising students can be refined to produce better results as a feedback technique. Almost all teachers felt they could work on making their praise more specific. Many of them admitted that they used "good" rather loosely as a "praise" response and that it might be better to explain to students exactly what type of behavior was deemed "good." "Telling students exactly what they did right was good for me, too. It helped me to remember things when making evaluations about students at report card time," said a TRL teaching at the junior high level. Generally, TRLs told us that they noticed that students' efforts improved as a result of the teachers' efforts to improve the specificity of their praise.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION

The findings on direct instruction were at first received with great skepticism by TRLs at each of the sites. Initial reactions indicated to us that teachers still held the stereotypical view of direct instruction, seeing it as a highly structured whole-class presentation model. Some TRLs expressed the concern, "that the administration is likely to mis-use this research which could set us back 30 years."

We carefully reviewed the research concepts and emphasized that teacher-directed instruction produces the greatest gain in student achievement of all instructional modes. Some TRLs were concerned that direct instruction precluded either the use of groups or the use of learning centers. We talked about how both fit the direct instruction approach and also talked about the necessity of achieving a balance between the goals of maximizing teacher-student interactions and gearing instruction to individuals or groups.

GROUP MANAGEMENT

Jacob Kounin's research on strategies for managing groups in the classroom was well received and widely used by TRLs and other teachers. For the most part, it was an easy set of concepts for teachers to "buy into."

The catchiness of the praise "With-it-ness" seemed to take hold immediately with almost all of the TRLs. Their documentation of what they implemented in the classroom between sessions indicated that they had given great consideration to this area. Primarily they were atuned to its easy reference to the old adage, "Teachers have eyes in back of their heads." With-it-ness was an area TRLs often chose to present when they disseminated research information.

Not surprisingly, the Group Focus and Accountability aspects of Kounin's work were "slow burners" that really ignited when they got going. Teachers did not lock into the concepts as readily as with-it-ness and overlapping, but when they became familiar with the concepts they readily admitted that "Keeping all students ivolved and on their toes" were areas well worth looking at by most teachers. Moreover, Group Focus and Accountability incorporates other teaching strategies including turn-taking and questioning. TRLs re-affirmed the importance of providing all students with opportunities to contribute to class discussions and to increase their success rates in responding correctly to teacher questions. As the concepts "took root" with the TRLs, the interest in the research was heightened.

TIME ON TASK

The Time on Task study was one of the few pieces of research that many TRLs seemed to know existed, even if they were not familiar with the content.

When we reviewed the three major concpets in the Time on Task research, we received varied reactions from the TRLs. In reference to "allocated time," a N.Y.C. TRL said, "If you take into account how long it takes a student to learn (Carroll), allocated time isn't worth a hill of beans." He went on to explain that allocated time periods, which are often outside the teacher's control, may be too long or too short to meet the student's needs and therefore leaves both teacher and student on a "dead-end path." Special education teachers contributed that allocated time is <u>completely</u> out of their control, as it is under the mandates of the state.

Most TRLs locked into the problems caused when the flow of the lesson was interrupted by announcements on the school loudspeaker, (referenced in Jane Stallings' list of Interactive and Non-interactive Classroom Activities). Moreover, there was general agreement that the Time on Task research had implications

for, and connections with, all of the other pieces of research we had shared. (See NIE Final Report, Jan. 1983, Feedback: Teacher change and detailed accounts of TRLs reactions to the above research studies)

IMPLICATIONS

- Ownership As It Relates To The Process Model

Criteria for selection of TRLs and building sites were established for implementation at all sites. In each case, the criteria were modified to fit the local context. We can speculate based on these experiences that ownership is important in establishing a cooperative program and some modifications are to be anticipated and tolerated. None of the adaptations diminished program effectiveness.

- Time Commitments

Frequency and length of sessions were initially questions of great concern to TRLs. They were often influenced by fatigue after a long day in the classroom, as well as heavy personal schedules. They were resistive to training sessions that lasted more than 1½ hours, or that convened more than once monthly. The ER&D process was atypical. However, by the end of the project, successful TRLs indicated that more time was needed for training sessions. We speculate that it is not until TRLs have worked through the entire process that they fully comprehend the issues. "Being" a TRL and "Becoming" a TRL are two separate phenomena. "Becoming" is a time-consuming process.

- Occurrence of Dissemination

Across sites, some TRLs disseminated more than others. Several critical factors emerged which seem to have influenced dissemination frequency. First, TRLs felt "ready" to disseminate only when they were comfortable with their grasp of the research information. This readiness occurred at different stages for different individuals. Second, availability of a dissemination forum was important. Where a support base was available, (e.g., released time, meeting space, administrative support) building level dissemination took place. Third, dissemination fosters further dissemination. Once "over the hump" TRLs felt confident to plan and conduct more research sharing sessions. Fourth, positive feedback from peers enhanced self-esteem and encouraged TRLs to continue presentations in the role of "peer helpers". Fifth, when TRLs perceived that their colleagues were in need of help, they were inspired to share the research information informally or formally.

- Research Focus

Originally we were concerned that the regenerated dissemination process could affect the "integrity" of the research. The transformation process through which the translated research was processed could result in a "watering down" of the research concept. We concluded that when a clear understanding of the research concept is established and the value of the research to the improvement of practice is underscored, the teacher-generated helping activities are assets to research application.

- Staff Development

Unlike inservice training, staff development is a process that occurs over a period of time. Staff development, including the internationalization of educational research, is a gradual process of change in one's attitudes, beliefs, and, subsequently, behaviors. Real growth and change, as such, cannot take place unless they are based on a voluntary process which allows the individual to make an internal decision about change. Additionally, we offer the following suggestions for enhancing professional growth of practicing teachers and insuring the continued improvement of practice.

- Mechanisms within the educational system should be established to link teachers directly to the wealth of knowledge in educational research.

- Teachers' work days should be restructured so that time is available at least semi-monthly for teachers to engage in a supportive staff development process which has as part of its focus the sharing and discussing of educational research as it relates to practice.

- All staff development and research sharing sessions should be conducted in a genuinely supportive atmosphere in which teachers feel free to investigate alternative practices and to select those they feel most comfortable implementing.

- Pre-Service Training

There is a wealth of good research on more effective practice which is useful not only to practicing teachers but also student teachers. Research on teaching effectiveness and classroom management should be integrated into teacher education programs.

Since institutionalizing the translation of educational research for all teachers' use is a long way off, training teacher candidates to understand and use research would insure greater use of research in its present form and help strengthen the ties between teachers and research.

FINDINGS

Knowledge of educational research findings is essential to teachers' ability to carry out their responsibilities in the highest professional sense, and its dissemination should be institutionalized in both preservice and in-service teacher preparation/staff development programs.

Teaching involves numerous sets of highly complex skills. Assuring that all teachers have access to state of the art knowledge about the teaching/learning process is as important in guaranteeing students' right to equal educational opportunity as it is in enhancing teachers' ability to reach the highest levels of professionalism.

The local teacher union structure serves as an extremely effective dissemination venicle for transmitting professional knowledge to teachers.

Unique benefits of using the local union structure include: 1) a high trust level on the part of recipients which fosters openness and receptivity; 2) an orientation toward collectivism and peer support as opposed to the traditional isolationism of individual teachers; 3) a personal sense of participation understood not only to involve getting, but also giving; and 4) an understanding of the necessity of local decision-making to mold program process to specific local needs, thereby establishing local "ownership" of the process. These benefits can be tapped, however, only with the full support of the local union leadership.

The higher the level of sophistication of existing training and dissemination mechanisms accessible to the union within a local site, the shorter will be the time necessary to train "Teacher Reserach Linkers" and begin systemwide and building level dissemination.

This finding might be anticipated, but it is important to note that while a local without highly developed structures for staff development may require more time to implement the process, it can even eventually realize the same degree of success as more experienced locals.

Teachers' internalization of research concepts to the extent that the knowledge becomes an integral part of their practice - a process we call "transformation" - develops over an extended period of time after intensive work with the research.

Merely reading research studies or research "translations" does not have a significant impact on teacher practice. Distribution of written materials, we believe, is relatively ineffective as a sole dissemination effort. Added to this must be training activities, such as simulations, role-playing and case studies; experimentation in the classroom; coaching; demonstrations; and interaction with peers. Interestingly, the dissemination role fosters even deeper understanding of the research as one is compelled to master or internalize the concepts sufficiently to articulate them and their relation to practice.

The major value of educational research to teachers is to improve/refine teacher skills through reflection on practice and to revitalize teachers' sense of professional pride and efficacy.

The use of educational research to set rigid prescriptions on how teachers should teach is counter-productive and unfounded. Research, however, can be extremely valuable in providing teachers the opportunity to reflect on their practice - assessing both their values and goals in teaching, which strategies produce which results and why, etc. We found that through the inquiry and analysis this engenders, teachers changed practice willingly and enthusiastically. This attitude resulted from the process which allowed them to fully explore the rationale for change prior to implementation; to assess which changes suited their own teaching values and styles; to determine the pace of change with which they were comfortable; and to explore from their own perspective, and their peers', why a particular strategy succeeded or failed. Unfortunately, such reflection is rarely emphasized in teacher training programs and actively discouraged by the lack of time school systems provide for such exercises.

A second, very strong effect of teachers' research study was to boost teacher morale. The research said to teachers who had worked long and hard to develop effective teaching strategies that indeed they were doing the right thing. This resulted in a renewed sense of professional pride and efficacy - a sense of self-satisfaction and accomplishment critical to sustaining high performance levels. Validation of practice through research allows teachers to explain to anyone not only what they are doing, but why.

The teacher-to-teacher dissemination process is highly effective, because it allows all teachers equal opportunity to interact on a professional basis.

Within the group of "Teacher Research Linkers" (TRLs) trained through this project, there developed a sense of collegiality and peer equality. This was true even though some TRLs entered the program with more staff development training than others. The information provided by the research and the commonality of classroom experience served to unify the group as equals.

Building level dissemination research, in which the principal's support is a critical factor, offers the greatest opportunities for institutionalization of the ER&D process and impact on large numbers of teachers.

Teacher-to-teacher study and dissemination of research at the building level is more successful than system-wide dissemination, because it allows for continuity in research study, provides a convenient meeting place, and takes advantage of similar needs and common experience which foster group cohesiveness. Because all teachers should be familiar with the existing professional knowledge base,

all must be given the opportunity to interact around it. The building level structure is the most practicable way of doing so. Study groups may be easily sustained over the extended periods of time that are necessary for "transformation" to take place.

Cooperation of school principal is a critical factor in successful building level dissemination. The non-evaluative nature of the process must be maintained. The principal can be instrumental in seeing that time and space are provided faculty for study of and reflection on practice.

Funds, rather than interest or desire, are the major obstacle in establishing collaboration between teachers and researchers and colleges of education.

No one assumes responsibility for dissemination of research to teachers, therefore no one has budgeted monies to pay for faculty time which might be devoted to research interpretations or translations, teacher research internships, or seminars. Despite the enthusiasm and interest university-level faculty and federal research labs centers expressed in the ER&D program, collaboration efforts have been stalled for lack of funds to proceed. Although we can replicate and expand upon what the project has done with classroom management and teaching effectiveness research, the program is threatened with eventual collapse without the influx of new research translations. Pilot sites are now investigating outside funding sources. University tenure and promotion systems which give little recognition to field work done in schools may present an additional problem in the future.

Institutionalization of the AFT ER&D process cannot be accomplished in two years.

It should be little surprise that institutionalization of a process as complex as this cannot be accomplished within a two-year period. Simply coordinating key players - teacher union leaders, teachers, administrators, researchers and college faculty - is a time-consuming process. Because "transformation" occurs only after an extended period of time, it takes at least one school year, possibly more, for the full realization of the impact and benefit of the process to become apparent to participants. It is this realization that fosters sustained commitment.

The AFT has developed a successful model for dissemination of educational research to teachers which should be replicated in local affiliates throughout the country.

The AFT Educational Issues Department plans to maintain its contacts with the research community and its efforts to disseminate the science of teaching. We plan to hold five-day training sessions for teachers designated as local site coordinators by local unions interested in replicating the ER&D program.

APPENDIX A

PROFILES OF PROJECT TRLS

Male	13%
Female	87%
Black	33%
White	67%
TRLs whose primary functions were as teacher specialists (trainers)	26%
Breakdown by grade-level	
Pre-school	3%
K-6	62%
Jr. High/Middle School	23%
High School	12%
Average number of years teaching	17 years
Degree levels	
Bachelors	16%
Bachelors + 30 or more credits	9%
Masters	48%
Masters + 30 or more credits	27%
Age levels	
Below 30 years of age	3%
31 - 40 years of age	40%
41 - 50 years of age	30%
51 + years of age	27%

Included in the groupings of TRLs were special education and alternative school teachers. At the secondary level, all major content areas were represented in addition to art and physical education/health. Several TRLs were reading specialists.

The research information was disseminated in even broader school environments. Sessions were designed specifically for special education teachers, high school teachers, and those at all levels responsible for remedial basic skills instruction. Teacher input from these sessions resulted in feedback supporting the successful adaptation of these research findings across age/grade and school district levels.

RESEARCH ACTION PLAN

NAME/ID _____

DATE _____

LOCAL _____

RESEARCH CONCEPTS PRESENTED

1. Of the research concepts presented today, which of them are you already using and how?

CONCEPT	CLASSROOM STRATEGY

2. Identify one or two research concepts you'd like to try in your classroom and what you hope will happen.

3. Tell what you will do or change in your classroom strategies to make this happen. Tell when and with what group or class you will try your strategy.

CONCEPT AND EXPECTATIONS	CLASSROOM STRATEGY
	WHEN/GROUP:
	WHEN/GROUP:

REACTION TO RESEARCH

Now that you have had the chance to use the research in your classroom, comment on how well it worked for you. If you feel the research/strategies worked, what change did you notice? Did what you want to happen, happen? If the research didn't seem to work, what do you think was the problem?

CONCEPT/STRATEGY TRIED	REACTION TO RESEARCH

Which of the research concepts do you plan to continue working on? What would you do differently to apply the research, if anything?

CONCEPTS TO CONTINUE	NEW CLASSROOM STRATEGY

APPENDIX C

EXTENDED ER&D COLLABORATION: CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS

NIE - "Instructional Time and Student Achievement Conference"
Northwestern University, Evanston, IL May 1981

NIE - Invitational Conference
"A Decade of Progress"
"Research on Teaching: Implications for Practice"
Airlie House, VA Feb. 1982

- National Council of States on Inservice Education
  Atlanta, GA Nov. 1982

- Research in Teacher Education Conference
  "Changing Teacher Practice"
  Research Development Center for Teacher Education
  University of Texas at Austin Sept. 1981

- American Federation of Teachers 65th and 66th National Conventions
  Denver, CO July 1981
  New York City, NY July 1982

- AFT QuEST Conferences (Quality Educational Standards in Teaching)
  New Hampshire Federation of Teachers Nov. 1981
  Gary Indiana Teachers Union Oct. 1981 and Oct. 1982
  United Federation of Maryland and D.C. Teachers Oct. 1982
  San Francisco Federation of Teachers and California Federation of Teachers May 1982
  Portland Federation of Teachers Oct. 1982
  Montana Federation of Teachers Oct. 1982

- Washington Teachers' Union Building Representatives Summer Conference July 1981

- National Teachers Conference
  "Teachers Putting the Pieces Together"
  District of Columbia Teacher Center April 1982

- Annual Spring Symposium
  District of Columbia Public Schools
  "Effective Schools: Today's Imperative" May 1982

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS IN ADDITION TO TRLs' DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

- Number of Teachers Reached by AFT ER&D Staff

System-wide workshops at local sites	500
Local AFT QuEST Conferences	800
National AFT QuEST Conferences	375
National Union Conventions	400
Education Conferences - Professional Organizations	200
TOTAL	2275

APPENDIX D

AFT - EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION PROGRAM

F I E L D L O G

STAFF MEMBER

SITE OR LOCATION

DATE TIME

PURPOSE OF VISITATION

PERSONS CONTACTED

FIELD ACTIVITIES

INTERACTIONS - COMMENTS - FOLLOW-UP